622 The command carries, moreover, a certain number of fixed offices. It is the chief who makes the poison for arrows; and he presides over ceremonies of initiation, of marriage or burial, concerning which we shall speak later. He organizes chants and dances, festivals both when they assume a ritual character, and when they have as a goal purely secular distraction. It is he who organizes 622 ball games. The ball game is widespread in western and northern 526 Mato Grosso, for it is found from the Paressi to the tribes of the Lower Guaporé. Among the latter people we have been able to gather evidences of its sociological significance. It is perhaps the same among the Nambikwara; but, at least during the period of nomadic life, the ball game is practiced with a purely recreational goal in mind. The teams are built up haphazardly from those present and upon the spur of the moment, and the game takes place in a spirit of complete improvisation.

WAR AND TRADE

648 The two subjects should be treated simultaneously, commercial 609 exchanges usually representing potential wars peacefully re-[91] 439 solved, and the wars, the outcome of unhappy transactions. Among the numerous bands which cross through the bush during the dry season, it is necessary to distinguish those who are related by family ties, and who often represent the population of a winter village—or of a group of villages—which has "burst forth" in the pursuit of the nomadic life. Among themselves these bands entertain relationships which are normally pacific, although not necessarily so. On the contrary, bands which are strangers to one another, composed of members not related among themselves and whose geographic location is far distant, or who are even separated by differences of language, mistrust one another at the same time that they feel themselves necessary to one another. Only when they meet can they procure desirable articles which only one of them is capable of obtaining or of making. These articles seemed to us to belong essentially to three categories: first of all women, whom only victorious expeditions are permitted to [283] carry off. Next seeds, notably bean seeds, and finally ceramics, or [284] even fragments of pottery used to make the weights of spindles. Group a1 whose cultural level is clearly inferior (especially in its ignorance concerning pottery) to that of its western and southern neighbors, according to the word of its chief, had carried on several campaigns during the last few years with the goal of procuring these two last articles.

[End Plate V]

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1. The little girl b5 and her dog (cf. p. 70). 2. Three sisters-in-law delousing each other (cf. p. 75). 3-4. Erotic games (A1 and a4) are hard to distinguish from contests of friendly scuffling where children add themselves willingly to the secondary wives and their husband (cf. pp. 62 and 69).

3: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
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of skill and initiative are the prerequisites of a good leader. It is he who makes the arrow-poison, although the preparation of *curare* among the Nambikuara is a purely profane activity surrounded by no ceremonial taboos or magic prescriptions. It is he, also, who makes the rubber ball used in the head-ball games which are played occasionally. The chief must be a good singer and dancer, a merrymaker always ready to cheer up the band and to brighten the dullness of daily life. This could easily lead to shamanism; and, in some cases, I have met with chiefs who were at the same time healers and trance addicts. Mystical life, however, is kept in the background among the Nambikuara, and, wherever they exist, magical functions are only secondary attributes of the leader. More often chieftainship and sorcery are divided between two different individuals. In this respect, there is a strong difference between the Nambikuara and their northwestern neighbors the Tupi-Kawahib among whom the chief is, first of all, a shaman, usually a psychotic addicted to dreams, visions, trances and impersonations.

But although they are oriented in a more positive direction, the Nambikuara chief's skill and ingenuity are none the less amazing. He must have a perfect knowledge of the territories haunted by his and other groups, be familiar with the hunting grounds, the location of fruit-bearing trees and the time of their ripening, have some idea of the itineraries followed by other bands, whether hostile or friendly. Therefore, he must travel more, and more quickly, than his people, have a good memory, and sometimes gamble his prestige on hazardous contacts with foreign and dangerous people. He is constantly engaged in some task of reconnoitering and exploring, and seems to flutter around his band rather than lead it.

Except for one or two men without actual power, but eager to cooperate and to receive occasional rewards, the passivity of the band makes a strong contrast with its dynamic leader. It seems as if the band, having relinquished certain advantages to the chief, were in exchange relying entirely upon him for its interests and safety. I received a particularly striking demonstration of this under rather strange circumstances. After several weeks' discussion, I had obtained from a chief the favor of taking me, together with a few companions and some animals loaded with presents, to the semi-permanent dwellings of his band which were uninhabited at that time. This was a chance for me to penetrate more deeply into the unexplored Nambikuara territory